(ij) Promotion of biopesticides and plant products and their registration under liberalised criteria as per Insecticides Act, 1968.

(iji) Phasing out of pesticide subsidy.

(iv) Phasing out/banning restricting the use of hazardous pesticides.

(v) Human Resource Development in IPM through establishment of "Farmers' Field Schools" and conduct of "Season Long Training" Programmes for imparting IPM training to farmers, Agriculture Extension Officers and Subject Matter Specialists.

(c) The biocontrol agents being released are:—

(i) Trichogramma spp.

(ii) Chrysoperla sp.

(iii) Lady bird beetles.

(d) Pest surveillance is being done by close examination of plants by employing visual observation sweepnet and water-pan methods. These are conducted at regular intervals for devising suitable control measures.

(e) During the year 1994-95, Directorate of Plant Protection, Government of India incurred an estimated expenditure of Rs. 1041.10 lakhs on Integrated Pest Management.

Schemes for selective mechanization

8351. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the various schemes available under the 'selective mechanization for optimising available resources' programme;

(b) the amount of money being spent on these programmes;

(c) the benefits which would accrue to agriculturists and agriculture: and

(d) the steps contemplated in advancing these programmes in line with those of the developed countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) The following schemes on agricultural mechanisation have been sanctioned for implementation during Eighth Five year plan:

1. Strengthening of Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institutes at Budni (Madhya Pradesh), Hissar (Haryana) and Garladinne, District Anantpur (Andhra Pradesh).

2. Establishment of Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute at Biswanath Charialj, District Sonitpur (Assam).

3. Setting up of Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes in Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

4. Strengthing of Agricultural Engineering Departments of State Agricultural Universities.

5. Development of Prototypes of Industrial Designs of Agricultural Implements.

A scheme 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanisation among Small Farmers' was also implemented during 1992-93 and 1993-94, under which subsidy was provided to the specified category of farmers for the purchase of small tractors of below 18 power take off horse power.

(b) The Eighth Five Year Plan outlay for schemse on mechanisation is Rs. 63 crore and that for 1995-96 is Rs: 10 crore.

(c) Training in the operation, maintenance and management of farm equipments would benefit the farmers in utilising the farm machines efficiently and economically; Whereas the testing of farm machines is intended to ascertain their performance characteristics for

improving their quality. The Industrial prototypes of newly designed agricultural equipments would pave the way for the availability of quality machines and implements to the farmers. Thus, these schemes would enhance the returns from agriculture by way of optimal utilisation of agricultural inputs and facilitate timeliness and precision in farm operations.

(d) With a view to advancing agricultural production, assistance is also provided to the farmers, among others, for acquiring agricultural implements and machines under various crop-specific programmes. Further, Government's efforts have been directed towards developing efficient agricultural machines and implements; devising improved agronomic practices; dissemination of improved technology and towards imparting skills to the users of agricultural machines for their operation, maintenance and management.

Small farmers agri-business Consortium

8352. SHRI RAM RATAN RAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state.

(a) whether the Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium has come into existence;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the structure and function of the consortium;

(d) the amount of money at its disposal; and

(e) the action taken by it uptill now?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) is a Society, registered on the 18th January, 94 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Membership of the Society consists of Primary Members and Associate Members. All such institutions desirous of participating in the affairs and Business of the society can become Primary members of the society on admission by the Board of Management and by fulfiling conditions as may be prescribed from time to time. Non-Resident Indians, foreign companies, co-operative societies, corporate bodies and other organisations involved in agro-business and such other institutions/individuals interested in the functioning of the society, may be admitted as Associate Members, subject to the conditions laid down by the Board of Management.

There is a Board of Management consisting of 15 Members. The Union Agriculture Minister is the President of the Board of Management and the Union Agriculture Secretary is its ex-officio Vice-President. The Chief Executive of the SFAC namely the Managing Director shall be the Member-Secretary of the Board. Out of the remaining Members, four shall be nominated by the President and eigth shall be elected by the Primary Members of the society from the various categories set out in the Articles of Association. There is also a Special Provision for the President to nominate upto eight Members on the First Board in connection with the completion of the formalities regarding registration and operationalising the business of the society.

The Articles of Association has envisaged that there will be a Policy Planning Council under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister of India to provide necessary direction as well as to review and evaluate the performance of the society periodically. The Membership of the Policy Planning Council shall include representation of various Ministries/departments/financial institutions, farmers etc. as contained in the Articles of Association. SFAC is envisaged to act essentially as a catalytic agent to promote agri-business activities in the country. In the performance of this role, SFAC will assist in and arrange for market surveys, project studies and preparation, training etc.

(d) During 1994-95 the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation made available